
Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2009

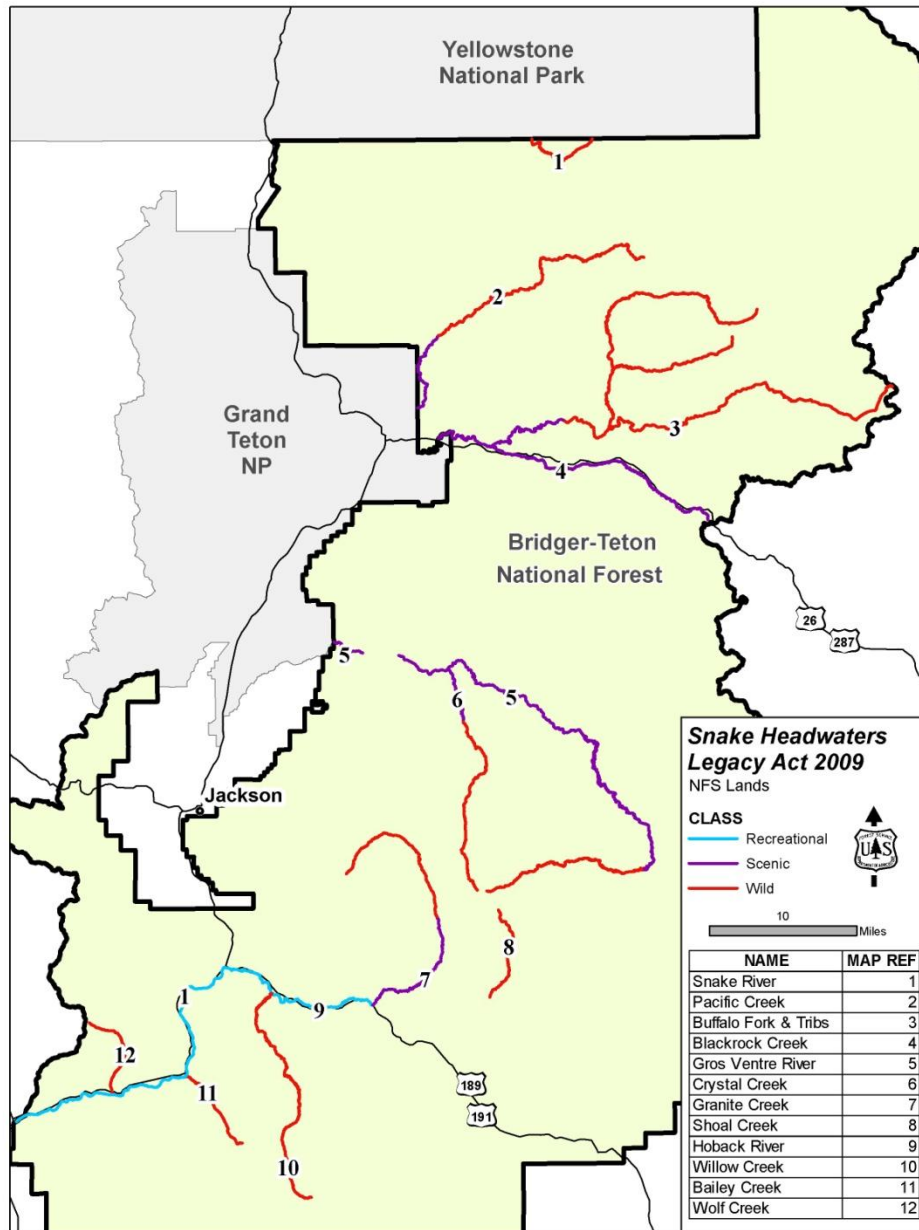
To protect for current and future generations ... the outstandingly remarkable scenic, natural, wildlife, fishery, recreational, scientific, historic, and ecological values of the rivers and streams of the headwaters of the Snake River System, while continuing to deliver water and operate and maintain valuable irrigation water infrastructure.”



Today's Workshop Focus

- How are designated rivers currently managed?
- How might management need to change?
- How can we tell if management is achieving our goals?





BTNF designated rivers

**Snake Headwaters Act
includes YNP/GTNP/NER also.**

Components of a Forest Plan Amendment

1. Defined corridor boundary (interim: 1/4 mile from high-water mark)
2. Forest Challenge, Goal, Objectives
3. Management Emphasis description (Overall)
4. Defined management area zones (Desired Future Conditions)
--Differences in Experience
5. Prescriptions, Guidelines, Standards
6. Indicators and Thresholds



Corridor Boundaries

Criteria

- Protection of identified river values is primary criterion—gap analysis to determine if sufficient protection currently exists.
- Physical features or legally identifiable survey/property lines may be used.
- Avoid narrow management area strips or ‘orphans’.
- No more than 320 acres per river mile, across whole designation.

Private lands

- Existing landownership cannot be used as a factor in determining the boundary.
- No authority to regulate nonfederal lands; River administering agencies work with local communities.
- Fee acquisition allowed up to 100 acres/mile average; easement acquisition from willing landowners allowed anywhere within boundary.

Forest Plan elements

Challenge

- Protect Cultural Resources and Natural Features



Goal & Objective

- 4.11 Waterways designated by Congress as the Wild and Scenic Snake River Headwaters are managed for the settings and qualities for which they are considered outstanding.
- 4.11(a) Implement the Comprehensive River Management Plan and monitor identified resource and social indicators.

MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS

All BTNF rivers in Snake River Headwaters designation, regardless of DFC, would have the same EMPHASIS.

- 1. Promote the rivers' natural hydrological processes, channel form and function, and ability to shape the landscape. Reduce impediments to free flow, ensure sufficient flows to protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values, and ensure the maintenance of water quality.**
- 2. Protect and enhance the natural biodiversity, complexity, and resiliency of riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains and adjacent uplands.**
- 3. Protect and enhance cultural resources as important links to the human history of the river corridors including historical and archeological sites, cultural landscapes, and ethnographic resources.**
- 4. Provide a diversity of opportunities and settings for visitors of varying abilities to experience, learn about, and have a direct connection with the rivers and their special values.**
- 5. Allow for multiple land uses and associated developments, consistent with each river segment's classification, that support the protection and enhancement of river values.**



FOREST PLAN Management Areas

Desired Future Condition (DFC) refers to a land or resource condition that is achieving a set of compatible multi-resource goals and objectives.

DFC areas in the Forest Plan serve as planning zones, with distinctive guidelines.

Non-Wilderness Rivers

DFC 3 CURRENT

- RIVER RECREATION
- Theme: an area managed to give river- and scenic-recreation experiences.



DFC 3B-E PROPOSED

- RIVER SPECIAL AREAS

Forest Service 'special areas' include Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, Roadless Areas—all places that require specific analysis when actions are proposed that might affect those designations

Wilderness Rivers

DFC 6

Wildernesses and Wilderness Study Areas

Theme: A mostly pristine area where the presence of people is rarely or never noticed.

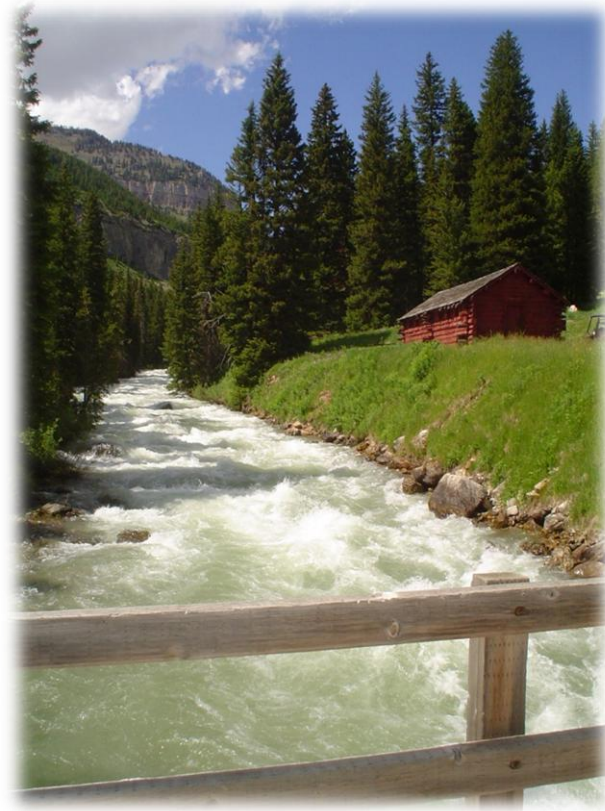
Experience: You find almost no signs of people away from trails or camping areas. The Wilderness shows you the natural processes of plants and animals living and dying. You see that old-growth forest is approaching maximum levels of acres with the result that some loss of shrubs and other forage species has happened.



You may find areas of the forest where recent burns or blowdowns dominate the landscape. Mineral and energy development is not permitted except where allowed under prior rights or through Congressional direction.

Amendment Two of BTNF Forest Plan

Rivers managed in 3 categories



Recreational	Scenic	Wild
Ready access by road, some shoreline development; past impoundment possible	Free of impoundments, some road access, largely undeveloped shorelines	Free of impoundments, trail access only, primitive shorelines

All rivers outside Wilderness managed under DFC 3 with the additional standards given in Amendment Two

Wilderness/WSA rivers managed under DFC 6A-D and 6S with additional standards given in Amendment Two



DFC 3: Eligible Rivers DFC 3B-E and DFC 6 overlay

What are the distinctive differences along each river segment

DFC 3B: Snake River Canyon—current plan

DFC 3C: Hoback, Blackrock, lower Buffalo

DFC 3D: Pacific, upper Buffalo, Gros Ventre, Crystal, Granite

DFC 3E: Willow, Bailey

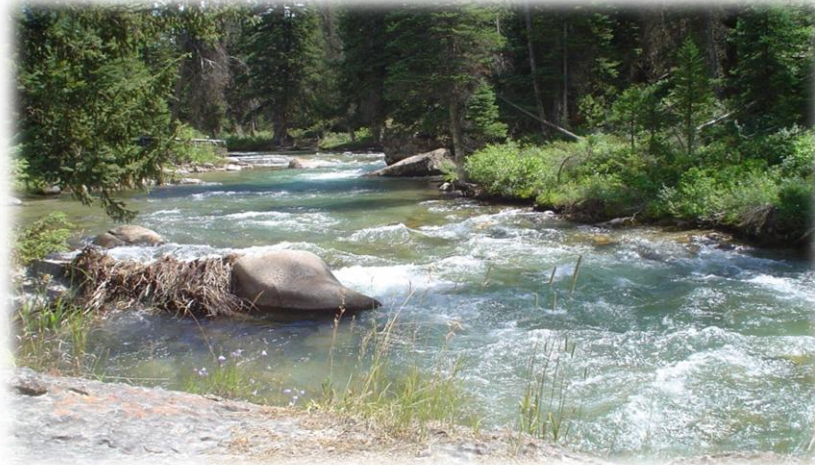
DFC 6: upper Snake, Pacific, Buffalo, Gros Ventre, Crystal, Granite, Shoal, Wolf



DESCRIBING THE EXPERIENCE

Management must meet the 'protect and enhance' mandate of the law for free-flow, water quality and all the defined ORVs. For example, an enhancement project may improve a particular river value *only* if it does not negatively affect any other identified value.

While differences in setting might allow different degrees of protection, no degradation is allowed in any subcategory or classification.



PREScriptions, GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

- **Overall** Prescriptions, Guidelines and Standards will apply to DFC 3B-E subcategories, replacing current DFC 3 language.
- A table of proposed variations in standards would tailor management to preserve the range of settings and opportunities.
- New standards for DFC 6 would apply as an overlay, or in addition to, standards currently in place according to the present subcategories of DFC 6.

Outstanding River Values

Protection needs to be considered for water quality, free-flow, & each identified river value

River	Scenic	Rec	Cultural	Eco/ Wildlife	Fish	Geo
Snake (wild)		●		●	●	
Snake (rec)	●	●		●	●	●
Willow		●		●	●	



What kinds of visitor or management activities may effect river values?

OVERALL DFC 3 B-E

Prescriptions, Guidelines, Standards

- Beaver Guideline: Coordinate with Wyoming Game and Fish Department to manage beaver populations to facilitate their ecological function in riparian zones.
- Fire Prescription: Fire management emphasizes minimum alteration of natural ecological function. Fire promotion and suppression, as directed in updated Forest-wide standards from 2004 Amendment, can both be utilized to move toward natural function.
- Fencing and Safe Road Crossings Guideline: Modify or remove fences to meet Wyoming Game and Fish Department wildlife-friendly guidelines and install fences and crossing structures where needed to provide safe passage for wildlife, subject to visual quality objectives.

Variable Standards Table



	DFC3 B	DFC3 C	DFC3 D	DFC3 E	DFC6 (all)
Bank Stabilization	Allowed for safety or ORVs at risk	Allowed for safety or ORVs at risk	Only to correct human-caused resource damage	Only to correct human-caused resource damage	Minimum tool process; only if human-caused
Sensitive wetlands improvements	Enhance where feasible		Priority for monitoring	Priority for protection projects	No enhancements
Timber activities	Selective hazard removal or facility enhancements only	Commercial allowed to enhance function or visual quality; helicopter and or horse-logging methods preferred.	Commercial allowed to enhance function.	WUI activities and habitat restoration allowed.	N/A

Capacity

Every CRMP is required to consider Capacity within the designated corridors



- The quantity of use which an area can sustain **without adverse impact** on the outstandingly remarkable values and free-flowing character of the river area, the quality of recreation experience, and public health and safety.
- Management Plans: Will state the kinds and amounts of use which the river can sustain **without impact to the values** for which it was designated.

Amendment Element Relationships



How can we tell if the
Standards and
Guidelines we put in
place are meeting the
goals of our

Management Emphasis for protecting identified
River Values while allowing for different uses
across the DFC zones?

- By using **Indicators and Thresholds** to evaluate capacity through monitoring.

Indicators

Variables that can be measured to track change in conditions caused by human activity



Indicator Criteria and Purpose

Meaningful

- Sensitive
- Responsive

Reliable

- Objective
- Repeatable

Feasible

- Cost effective
- Baseline data available
- Minimum impact

- ❖ Focus data collection efforts
- ❖ Translate desired character into something measurable
- ❖ Track trends in conditions over time
- ❖ Evaluate effectiveness of management

Thresholds

Determining the Measure:

- ❖ based on management experience, academic literature, scientific research, law and policy, and other sources
- ❖ standards may vary across river segments according to the desired conditions established for each
- ❖ a universal standard may in some cases be desirable

Threshold amount will trigger management action to address negative trends in indicator measurements



Scientific vs. social tipping points

Thresholds should be informed by science, but setting standards is a value-based decision

River Value	Indicator	Thresholds				
		DFC 3B	DFC 3C	DFC 3D	DFC 3E	DFC 6
Ecological/ Wildlife	Number of wildlife incidents in the river corridor as reported by Wyoming Game & Fish	No more than 3 incidents in the river corridor per year	No more than 3 incidents in the collective river corridors per year	No more than 3 incidents in the collective river corridors per year	No more than 2 incidents in the collective river corridors per year	No more than 2 incidents in the collective river corridors per year
	# of large animal-vehicle collisions on highways per year per segment	No more than 32 per year	No more than 30 per year per segment	Data not collected	n/a	n/a
Recreation/ Water Quality	Number of stock holding areas exceeding specified Stock Impact Rating within 200 feet of the river	N/A	Stock Impact Rating ≤ 8	Stock Impact Rating ≤ 10	Stock Impact Rating ≤ 7	Stock Impact Rating ≤ 7

Strategies for Future Management



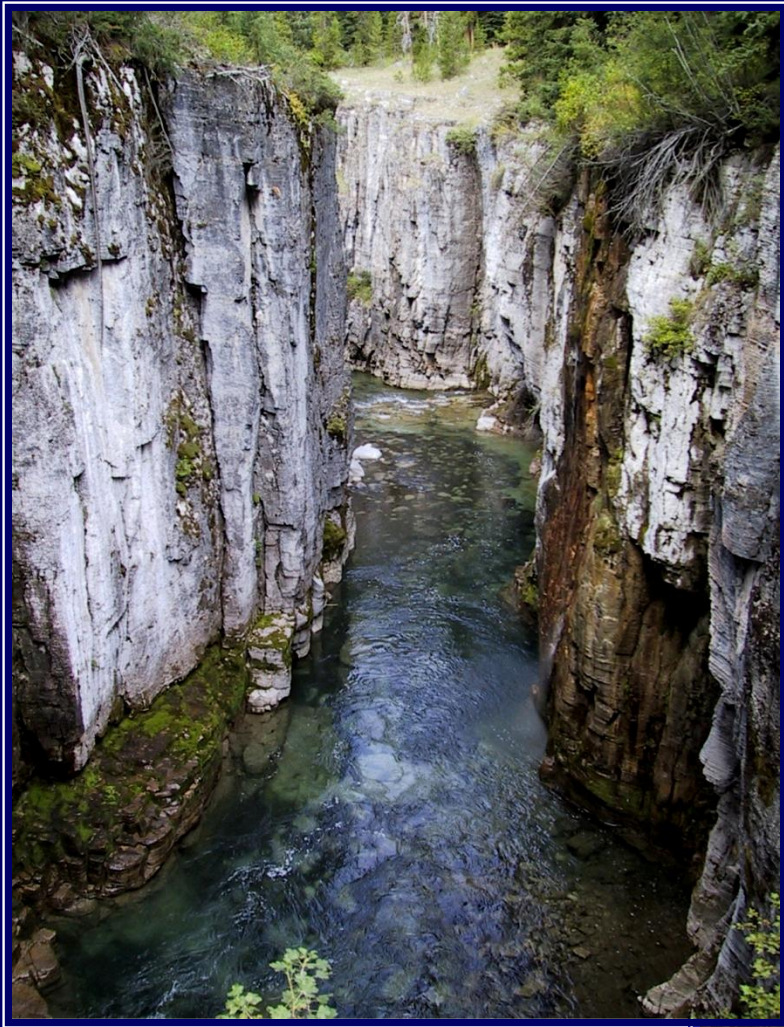
- ❖ **Monitor Indicators to determine trends**
- ❖ **Compare to thresholds to establish need for change**
- ❖ **Develop suggestions for what changes to try first**
- ❖ **New capacity limiting processes would require public review before being established**
- ❖ **June 1 Workshop to focus on these ideas**

Our Vision

The Bridger-Teton National Forest is home to world-class headwaters, wildlife, wilderness and wildlands. Conserving these values, in concert with providing for sustainable uses, is our legacy. We are leaders committed to service, action, and excellence.



Buffalo Fork of the Snake *Wild River*



South Fork Falls

